

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name ROBINWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number SOMERSTOWN ESTATES

name of related multiple property listing N/A

## Location

street & number TAVANO ROAD; SOMERSTOWN ROAD

city or town OSSINING

state NEW YORK code NY county WESTCHESTER code 119 zip code 10562

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

not for publication

vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register

    determined eligible for the National Register

    determined not eligible for the National Register

    removed from the National Register

    other (explain):    

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | building(s) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 23           | 3               | buildings    |
| 0            | 0               | sites        |
| 0            | 3               | structures   |
| 0            | 0               | objects      |
| 23           | 6               | <b>Total</b> |

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD

roof: ASPHALT

other: GLASS, METAL

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**Narrative Description**

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**Summary Paragraph**

The Robinwood Historic District consists of 21 mid-century Modern houses erected as the centerpiece of a unified housing development in the mid-1960s in the Town of Ossining, Westchester County, New York, and one preexisting house which was modified so as to comport with the new development. The houses which form this cohesive mid-twentieth century housing enclave were designed by architect Harry Wenning, a New Jersey native who was educated at the College of William & Mary and subsequently at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he earned a degree in architecture in 1952. For the Robinwood houses, Wenning authored designs which were stylistically contemporary and well-integrated with their immediate site and natural surroundings; all featured signature design features such as open floor plans, clerestory windows, the extensive use of wood, and large glazed expanses. Few houses exhibiting such Modern architectural tendencies characteristic of the post-Second World War era were constructed in the town, making this collection all the more distinctive, particularly since they were built as a cohesive group and thus constitute an interrelated architectural experience. The nominated historic district is organized around the L-shaped spine of Tavano Road, which extends eastward from Somerstown Road and is bordered in large measure by thickly wooded undeveloped land; while the various houses within the district feature relatively uniform setbacks from the road, their relationship to the physical traits of their individual parcels, and not their relationship to other adjacent houses, was the critical factor in the manner in which they were sited and oriented. The topography within the district is naturally undulating; as such, many of the houses are elevated on rises of land above the level of the roadway; these various properties feature landscape elements such as grassy lawns, mature deciduous and coniferous trees, and ornamental plantings. Wenning's Robinwood houses, characterized by their straightforward geometric massing, post-and-beam construction and large window expanses, maximized the interaction between the house and landscape and lends them one of their foremost and most enduring qualities. These houses incorporated the best qualities necessary for efficient and economical construction with a design aesthetic that reads as clearly today as when the dwellings were constructed. The Robinwood Historic District remains largely as it was when first completed: an intact, cohesive and significant collection of mid-century Modern dwellings erected as part of a comprehensive development scheme within a naturally landscaped enclave. The nominated district contains a total of 22 contributing dwellings— 21 houses built to Welling's design and one which was modified from an existing house constructed ca. 1920. There are no non-contributing principal resources located within the district boundary.

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**Narrative Description**

*Location, Setting & District Character*

The nominated historic district is located within the Town of Ossining, Westchester County, New York, and is situated roughly halfway between the north-south routes of State Route 9A and the Taconic State Parkway, two

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important travel corridors. Tavano Road forms a short dead-end extension from the course of Somerstown Road (State Route 133), which follows a northeast-to-southwest course as it moves through this part of the town; to the west, beyond Route 9A, Route 133 terminates at U.S. Route 9 in the Village of Ossining; it extends eastward and then jogs briefly northward where it terminates in a cul-de-sac. The immediate area of the town in which the nominated historic district is located is characterized by relatively dense residential development, including both older nineteenth century dwellings, but, more typically, houses erected in the mid to later twentieth century, some as components of larger planned developments. To the immediate south of the nominated district area is a large 24-acre campus which functioned for a time as the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, the centerpiece of which is a ca. 1920 dormitory and office building; beyond this campus, further to the south, is a large housing development centering on Cooper Drive. To the southwest, but not in direct communication with properties contained within the historic district, is the large expanse of open recreational space associated with Charles K. Ryder Memorial Park, which is owned and operated by the Town of Ossining. The district's east side is bordered by a wooded expanse of undeveloped land which, in concert with the open space of the campus property to the south, has allowed the district's natural setting to survive in largely unmolested fashion without significant intrusions. Included within the district is a small pond associated with one of the dwellings on the north side of Tavano Road, and there are also two slightly larger bodies of water, one which bears the name Royall Pond, situated outside of the district to the north and immediately east of Somerstown Road.

The Robinwood Historic District retains distinctive natural elements that, along with its thematically related collection of dwellings, provides the enclave with a sense of cohesion and thereby relates the various properties to one another as components of a unified planned scheme, notwithstanding their own unique and highly individualistic qualities. Mature deciduous and coniferous trees line both sides of Tavano Road as one enters the district area from Somerstown Road and are also scattered throughout the various domestic properties; the trees additionally serve to frame the properties, particularly the contributing houses situated on the south and east sides of the district, from adjacent non-historically related parcels. There are no sidewalks along Tavano Road, which is aligned throughout the district area by raised concrete curbing. While each property is characterized by its own accompanying landscape, which the houses were meant to engage with, there are certain features, such as the presence of mature trees of considerable scale, which provide an overarching feeling and aesthetic. Each house typically has a manicured lawn and decorative plantings held tight against the perimeter of the building; some lawns are punctuated by an occasional small stone outcrop and some have additional planting beds in front of or to the side of the house. The gently undulating character of the land is most noticeable on the small northward spur of Tavano Road, which rises perceptibly moving south to north and which culminates in a cul-de-sac; the properties



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disposed on the north and east sides on this cul-de-sac are thus elevated above the road and the properties to the immediate south and west.

*Building List & Resource Overview*

The following building list moves through the Robinwood Historic District starting at Tavano Road's intersection with Somerstown Road, moving first from west to east, along the north side of Tavano Road, then along the rounding course of the cul-de-sac that extends northward from the main east-to-west axis of the road, before progressing westward along the south side of Tavano Road back towards Somerstown Road. All of the nominated properties are associated with addresses on Tavano Road, notwithstanding one which has a Somerstown Road address due to the fact that its driveway communicates with that road. For each property the street address and associated SBL are noted. All of the houses within the historic district were built in the period 1965 to 1969 and are considered contributing resources. Secondary resources are indented below the principal resource/parcel with which they are associated; all of these secondary features have been deemed non-contributing in the context of this nomination given they all appear to post-date the initial development phase and cited period of significance.

The houses which form the district's architectural stock are in many ways unique, with a variety of configurations and footprints which correspond with particular and specific site conditions and view sheds, but at the same time they share exterior characteristics which link them to a single point of origin and help lend this enclave its cohesiveness. These include their distinctive geometric massing and the use of either broad low-pitched gable roofs or flat roofs, or, in one instance, a hipped roof; the use of concrete block or brick for foundations; post and beam construction, with the expression of roof frame elements on the exterior at eave's level; deeply projecting eaves, which serve in part as shade and cover; large glazed expanses, particularly in association with entrance bays and principal interior spaces, and the use of window bands and clerestory units; elevated and cantilevered porches, which form an exterior extension of interior living spaces; and vertical board wood siding.

1 Tavano Road (90.10-3-15); 1 contributing building

Wood frame multi-story dwelling with broad low-pitched gable roof, built above a roughly rectangular but irregular footprint and oriented with its principal elevation facing eastwards, towards an expanse of grassy lawn which is bordered on its south side by a metal fence; the south elevation fronts on Tavano Road and presents itself as a secondary elevation which is punctuated by two garage bays fitted with overhead doors. The east façade features asymmetrically disposed fenestration, including two large windows, each of which has three narrow casements situated immediately below larger clerestory windows. The eaves project considerably from the wall planes and are enlivened by expressed structural purlins. A large exterior chimney rises through the roofline on the east elevation where there is a broad uncovered wood deck that allows for direct communication between the principal living spaces and the outdoors and which, along with a cantilevered section of the upper floor, additionally serves as a

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covered area for one of two doors that lead inside, to the lower level, from this elevation; the other communicates directly with the garage. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding; asphalt roofing; replacement windows.

62 Somerstown Road (90.10.3-14); 1 contributing building, ca. 1920/1967

Wood frame two-story dwelling consisting of multiple engaged blocks which are covered by gable roofs and which were erected above an irregular but roughly rectangular plan. This house is set back and well screened by natural growth from Tavano Road; its driveway does not communicate directly with Tavano Road but instead fronts on Somerstown Road. This was an existing dwelling built ca. 1920 which was substantially aggrandized and modified at the time the Robinwood project was undertaken; as such, its exterior features do not entirely comport with the salient exterior design features which characterize the remainder of the district's Wenning-designed dwellings. Both older and more recent features are apparent. Local fieldstone was employed for a portion of the first-story and also for a chimney which rises from the roof ridge of the main section; the remaining walls were sheathed with horizontal wood boards.

Storage shed (1 non-contributing building)

Small one-story wood-frame shed building with gable roof and rectangular footprint.

5 Tavano Road (90.10-3-13); 1 contributing building

Wood frame one-story dwelling with low-slung profile (as viewed from Tavano Road), raised basement and flat and pitched roofs, oriented and sited to capitalize on a small pond which is situated immediately behind the house; it was erected above a polygonal plan that combines a rectangular-shaped main block from which extends, to the north, a triangular shaped projection. The façade features simple rectilinear patterning with contrasting wood and stucco finishes and is punctuated by long window bands; evenly spaced expressed purlins enliven the deeply projecting eaves, which are carried around the building. The triangular-plan projection, which is not unlike the bow of a ship, extends from the main rectangular mass of the building and cantilevers out over the pond, and there the deeply projecting eaves form a partial shelter for the porches which provide direct communication with the interior; this section is sustained by slender steel columns and associated underwater piers. This section rises above the mass of the main block to create a soaring glazed living space which capitalizes on the immediate setting. Solar panel arrays have been installed on the roof near the south elevation and these partially screen the house's chimney and the roof of the rear projection when viewed from the road. Concrete block foundation; stucco panels; asphalt roofing.

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7 Tavano Road (90.10-3-12); 1 contributing building

Wood frame split-level house with broad low-pitched gable roof and largely self-contained rectangular plan; this building was integrated into its site so as to accommodate at-grade access to the principal level and also to the two-bay automobile garage, which is located on the west elevation and below the level of the entrance. The principal entrance on the south-facing façade is set within a large glazed expanse that rises from grade to roofline; two smaller paired windows to the west of the entrance bring natural light into the interior. Expressed purlin tails enliven the deeply projecting eaves. The upper principal story is sheathed with vertical wood boards in an alternating narrow and wider pattern; the roof is covered with asphalt shingles and punctuated by two skylights and a concrete block chimney is present on the east elevation, where a porch is also located. The concrete block foundation was not expressed as a smooth planar surface but was instead enlivened by projecting some of the blocks beyond the remainder of the elevation, thereby creating a simple geometric pattern; this device, used on any number of houses in Robinwood, will be cited subsequently in this documentation as a patterned concrete-block wall. A wood balcony is present on the west elevation, above the garage bays, and is accessed by means of two sets of sliding doors. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding; asphalt roofing.

9 Tavano Road (90.10-3-11); 1 contributing building

Wood frame split-level dwelling with irregular footprint and broad low-pitched gable roof, oriented with its principal elevation facing southwards towards Tavano Road. The house's primary entrance is located in a tall glazed expanse that rises from grade to roofline and which is situated near the center of the façade, immediately astride the north-to-south roof ridge. That portion of the façade west of this entrance feature is recessed from the remainder of the elevation, allowing for additional glazing on west return wall adjacent to the entrance. To the west of the entrance bay and corresponding with upper-level living space are two paired windows, while to the east, and corresponding with the recessed portion of the façade, is a larger glazed expanse. The west elevation has an elevated porch which, as with the other houses, creates a sheltered space below, at grade. On the opposite, east, elevation is located a two-bay automobile garage with overhead doors, the difference in grade between the garage and the flower bed that fronts the façade being accounted for by a short run of stone retaining wall. The façade has wood siding and a patterned concrete block foundation wall; the deeply projecting eaves are embellished with expressed purlin tails. A concrete block exterior chimney rises from the roofline towards the rear. In addition to the main mass of the building there is a long low projection that extends eastwards from the building and which is covered by a long, low single-pitch roof; while visually and aesthetically compatible with the main section, it is nevertheless a more recent, non-historic addition. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding.

11 Tavano Road (90.10-3-10); 1 contributing building

Wood frame split-level dwelling with broad low-pitched gable roof erected above a rectangular plan and oriented with its roof ridge on a northwest-to-southeast axis. Although situated in close proximity to it, this building is well

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screened from Tavano Road by the dense canopy of mature conifers. The house features brick corresponding with the lower level and vertical wood siding above. The principal entrance is located on the southwest façade and is set within a tall glazed expanse that rises from grade to roofline. Paired windows are located to either side of this feature on the upper level and there is additionally a paired window corresponding with the lower level to one side of the entrance bay. The gable end opposite Tavano Road has an exterior brick chimney and a cantilevered porch which has since been extended with an additional section. Brick lower level; vertical board wood siding; asphalt roofing.

15 Tavano Road (90.10-3-9); 1 contributing building

Wood frame split-level dwelling with broad low-pitched gable roof, oriented with its roof ridge on a roughly north-to-south axis and built above an irregular plan. The principal elevation was oriented to face southwards towards Tavano Road and there presents as a broad gabled elevation which contrasts a painted patterned concrete block wall corresponding with the lower level and deeply stained vertical wood siding. The main entrance is situated in a tall glazed expanse which rises from grade to roof level and which is centrally located and recessed from the remainder of the elevation, with a narrow paired window flanking the door on one side. The remaining fenestration of the façade is asymmetrically disposed and to one side (east) of the entrance bay consists of two paired windows corresponding with the upper level interior spaces, each of which has an upper clerestory unit which rises to meet the rake of the roof; on the opposite side of the entrance are windows which bring light into the lower level, above which is a single paired window treated as those on the opposite side of the entrance. The deeply projecting eaves are embellished with expressed purlin tails. The west elevation includes a square-plan section with single-pitch roof which, while it follows the design mandates of the remainder of the building, appears to be a subsequent addition to the original construct. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding.

17 Tavano Road (90.10-3-8); 1 contributing building

Wood frame split-level dwelling with broad low-pitched gable roof erected above an irregular but roughly rectangular plan; the principal elevation was oriented to face eastwards, towards the road, and is partially screened from view by mature and more recent plantings. The façade features contrasting expanses of patterned concrete-block wall, corresponding with the lower level, and vertical wood siding which sheaths the upper wall areas. The entrance bay is centrally located and consists of a broad glazed expanse which rises from grade to roof level; the wood door is of a distinctive paneled type and painted in polychrome fashion. Two paired windows corresponding with the upper level are disposed to the north side of the entrance bay; a narrow window band, also corresponding with the upper level, is situated on the opposite side. A chimney rises above the roofline from its position at the rear (west elevation) of the building. The north elevation is utilitarian in concept and accommodates two garage bays with overhead doors at grade. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding.

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19 Tavano Road (90.10-3-7); 1 contributing building

Wood frame multi-story dwelling with broad low-pitched gable roof, oriented with its façade facing in a southeasterly direction towards the Tavano Road cul-de-sac. The roof ridge is oriented on a northeast-to-southwest orientation, and the house occupies an elevated position above the cul-de-sac and the property to the immediate south. The façade contrasts brick veneering at lower level with vertical wood siding which sheaths the upper areas. The entrance bay is centered within the façade and corresponds with a glazed expanse that rises from grade to roof level. Windows punctuate the brick lower-level walls to either side of the entrance; tripartite window groupings correspond with the upper levels. A chimney rises prominently from the front pitch of the gable roof, just astride the entrance bay, and an elevated porch extends from the northeast gable elevation. Brick lower level; vertical board wood siding.

In-ground swimming pool (1 non-contributing structure)

32 Tavano Road (90.11-1-3); 1 contributing building

Wood frame multi-level dwelling with broad, low-pitched gable roof, erected above a largely self-contained rectangular plan with roof ridge oriented on an east-to-west axis. The façade was oriented to present southwards, towards the cul-de-sac, and the house was banked into its sloping side with two garage bays being integrated into the façade elevation. Expressed purlins enliven the deeply projecting eaves of the gable roof. A chimney rises from the west gable elevation, and a small cupola with hipped roof straddles the roof ridge towards the center of the building. The entrance door, which has been replaced with a glazed unit with corresponding narrow sidelights, is set within a large glazed expanse that rises from grade to roofline and which is centered within the façade, east of the garage bays. The lower level features a veneer of small scale stone laid in a random ashlar pattern which, like the entrance door, appears to be a subsequent retrofit. Above the garage and corresponding with the upper living spaces is a narrow band within which are fitted three-paired windows; larger windows, also set within a band, are present on the opposite side of the entrance. Clerestory windows bring natural light into the west gable end. Wood siding; asphalt roofing.

30 Tavano Road (90.11-1-4); contributing building

Wood frame and concrete-block single-story dwelling with low-slung profile and both flat and gable-roofed sections, erected above an irregular but roughly rectangular plan oriented on a north-to-south axis. This dwelling is immediately conspicuous by virtue of the elevated position it maintains on the northeast side of the cul-de-sac; it was built on the brow of a rise of land and rises well above the properties to the immediate south and north. The façade was oriented to face westwards, the principal entrance being situated within a recessed block with gabled roof, the west wall of which is fully glazed. Adjacent and south of this gabled block is a wood-frame block with flat

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roof which, along with two similar flat-roofed sections with concrete block walls, lend the building its distinctive profile. Both the north concrete-block section and flat-roofed frame section have narrow clerestory window bands positioned just below the deeply projecting eaves, which are embellished with expressed purlin tails. A chimney rises above the low roofline from a position at the rear of the gable-roofed block. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding.

Automobile garage (1 contributing building)

Detached wood-frame automobile garage with low single-pitched roof; two bay configuration with overhead doors.

28 Tavano Road (90.11-1-5); 1 contributing building

Wood frame multi-story house with irregular plan and gabled and single-pitched roofs, oriented with its main gable-roofed block facing westwards towards the cul-de-sac. As with the neighboring house to the north, it was built on a rise of land which provides it with an elevated position. The gable-roofed section has brick corresponding with the lower level, punctuated by a single, offset paired window, and vertical wood siding above; two paired windows bring light into the upper level living spaces and above them are clerestory windows which rise to eave's level. The deeply projecting eaves of the main block are embellished with expressed purlin tails; an exterior brick chimney rises through the eaves on the south elevation. Extending from the north elevation of the gabled block is a single-story section with single-pitched roof that follows the roof pitch established by the main block's gable; it is largely glazed on the east and west elevations. A second brick exterior chimney is situated at the northwest corner of this section, where it engages a low-slung garage block. A short single-story section with single-pitched roof extends from the south elevation, and elevated wood porches are located at both the lower and upper levels on the rear (east) elevation of the main gable-roofed section, the lower one being returned partially around the south elevation. Brick lower level; vertical board wood siding.

In-ground Swimming Pool (1 non-contributing structure)

Pool House (1 non-contributing building)

Small masonry-walled building with rectangular footprint and low single-pitched roof.

26 Tavano Road (90.11-1-6); 1 contributing building

Wood frame single-story house with low-pitched nearly flat roof, erected above an irregular but roughly rectangular plan. The building has a low-slung profile which holds it tightly against its site, that being a rise of land at the southeast corner of Tavano Road's northern spur. The façade was oriented to face southwards and features two distinctive blocks between which is a deeply recessed entrance bay which is spanned by purlins that sustain a partial trellis roof. The façade fenestration is asymmetrically conceived; the section to the north of the entrance has only clerestory windows; the opposite section has both clerestory windows and, below them, two tripartite window

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bands. The recessed entrance bay accommodates double-leaf 32-panel wood doors which are flanked by large floor-to-ceiling windows which serve as sidelights. As for the rear elevation, it accommodates an elevated porch which rises well above grade—the associated land falls off to the east, behind the house—and which provides an excellent vantage point from which to view the surrounding natural scenery. Expressed purlin tails enliven the deeply projecting eaves. Among the building's distinctive features is its foundation, which was executed with rectangular-shaped cast-stone units with a rough aggregate face, these being laid up in a stretcher bond with gray mortar. Concrete block and cast-stone foundation; vertical board wood sheathing.

24 Tavano Road (90.11-1-7); 1 contributing building

Wood frame one-story dwelling with flat roof, erected above an irregular but roughly rectangular plan, and located at a discreet position southeast of the terminus of the main east-to-west axis of Tavano Road. The façade's massing and configuration is similar in many regards to 26 Tavano Road, having two distinctive blocks, flat roofed, between which is a deeply recessed bay which accommodates the principal entrance, which is fitted with a paneled door flanked by full-size windows which function as sidelights. A higher section with flat roof rises from behind the entrance bay and accommodates clerestory windows. A decidedly horizontal emphasis furthers the building's low-slung profile and is in part reinforced by the horizontal window bands and clerestory windows which punctuate the front wall of the projecting sections. The lower portions of the walls, below the window bands, feature buff-hued Roman brick laid in stretcher bond; an occasional brick was laid up so as to project forward from the wall to relieve the otherwise planar surface, a treatment echoing the patterned concrete-block work seen on other houses. The upper areas of the wall are sheathed with vertical wood boards that partially counter the building's otherwise horizontal thrust. Expressed purlin tails accentuate the house's projecting eaves. Concrete block foundation; brick and vertical board wood siding; replacement windows.

22 Tavano Road (90.10-3-26); 1 contributing building

Wood frame split-level house with broad gable roof, built above a roughly rectangular plan with its roof ridge aligned on a roughly east-to-west axis. The façade was oriented to face northwards, tending slightly to the east, towards Tavano Road, and exhibits asymmetrical fenestration and a central entrance which is situated in a glazed expanse that rises from grade to roof level; the present six-panel door appears to be a modification. Two paired windows with sliding casements are present to the west of the entrance bay, corresponding with the upper level, and there is a window band on the opposite side, also corresponding with the upper level. A stone chimney rises prominently from the front pitch of the gable roof, just astride of the entrance bay; expressed purlin tails are present at eave's level. The west gable elevation has clerestory windows corresponding with the upper level living spaces within. A large uncovered porch aligns with the full width of the rear, south elevation and returns around the east gable elevation. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding; asphalt roofing.



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20 Tavano Road (90.10-3-25); 1 contributing building

Wood frame multi-story dwelling with broad low-pitched gable roof, erected above an irregular but roughly rectangular plan and oriented with its principal elevation facing northwards towards Tavano Road. The roof ridge was aligned on a north-to-south axis, tending slightly to the east, and as such the façade presents as a broad gable-fronted construct with center entry; the portion of the façade west of the entrance projects forward from the remainder of the building and thus creates the modified rectangular plan. The entrance, set within a large glazed expanse that rises from grade to roofline, is fitted with double-leaf 8-paneled wood doors. Paired windows with clerestory windows above correspond with the upper level and are situated to either side of the entrance bay. Expressed purlin tails enliven the deeply projecting eaves. The lower portions of the building feature walls laid up with buff-colored Roman brick laid up in stretcher bond; the upper wall surfaces have vertical board wood sheathing. Concrete block and brick foundation; vertical board wood siding.

18 Tavano Road (90.10-3-24); 1 contributing building

Wood frame single-story building with hipped roof, built above a self-contained square plan and banked into its site—which slopes downwards considerably from west to east—so as to allow for at-grade access to a one-bay garage on the east elevation at basement level. The principal elevation was oriented to face northwards towards the road and features a single central recessed bay in which the principal entrance is situated. The house is covered by a broad hipped roof with projecting eaves which rises to a central monitor which accommodates a top-mounted skylight; there is additionally a more conventional skylight located on the east pitch of the hipped roof. A cantilevered porch aligns with the east elevation and returns around the rear, south, elevation; fenestration on that elevation includes two paired windows corresponding with the lower level and sliding doors which allow for direct communication with the porch from the upper level, in addition to a paired window. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding; asphalt roofing.

Automobile garage (1 non-contributing building)

Wood-frame garage with gable-on-hip roof and two-bay configuration with overhead doors; it post-dates the construction of the house.

16 Tavano Road (90.10-3-23); 1 contributing building

Wood frame single-story dwelling with low-slung profile and flat and gable-roofed sections, built above an irregular plan and oriented with its façade facing north towards the road, tending slightly to the east; it was built on a rise of land that elevates it above the road. There is a gable-roofed block which is aligned with its roof ridge on a roughly north-to-south axis, this block being recessed behind flanking flat-roofed sections. The principal entrance is via paired doors which correspond with the gabled and recessed section, the north wall of which is fully glazed.

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Expressed purlin tails are present at eave's level and a chimney rises in prominent fashion from the west pitch of the recessed section's gable roof. The easternmost block of the house accommodates two garage bays with overhead doors on its east elevation. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding.

In-ground swimming pool (1 non-contributing structure)

14 Tavano Road (90.10-3-22); 1 contributing building

Wood frame multi-level dwelling with low-slung profile and broad gable roof, erected above a roughly rectangular but irregular plan with its principal roof ridge aligned on a roughly east-to-west axis; the house was oriented with its façade facing northwards towards Tavano Road. The façade presents as two distinctive parts: the eastern portion, which projects forward from the remainder of this elevation, is given over to a three-bay automobile garage above which rises a gabled block with four evenly spaced rectangular windows; extending westward from this section, and recessed behind it, is a long narrow block, the center of which is penetrated by a recessed entrance bay and the walls of which contrast vertical wood sheathing with random-range granite ashlar; the latter was also employed for the piers which frame the garage bays. The front pitch of the roof of this section is punctuated by two skylights, with clerestory windows aligned below eave's level providing additional natural light. Expressed purlin tails enliven the eaves of the projecting roof. Concrete block foundation; granite ashlar and vertical board wood siding; asphalt roofing.

12 Tavano Road (90.10-3-21); 1 contributing building

Wood frame split-level dwelling with roughly rectangular but irregular footprint and broad low-pitched gable roof, oriented with its principal elevation facing northwards towards Tavano Road. The house's primary entrance is located in a tall glazed pavilion, offset, which projects forward from the remainder of the façade and which rises from grade to roofline. The roof ridge is aligned on a north-to-south axis and corresponds with the projecting entrance mass on the north elevation and a projection on the rear, south, elevation. To the east of the entrance bay and corresponding with upper-level living space are two paired windows with clerestory windows above; to the immediate west is another paired window with a clerestory unit above; this window configuration is repeated near the northwest corner. The raised basement is laid in brick with wood sheathing above; the deeply projecting eaves are embellished with expressed purlin tails. The west elevation has a two-bay automobile garage with overhead doors at grade level but is otherwise blind, and there is an elevated porch on the rear, north, elevation. A stone wall laid with tightly fitted irregular stone aligns a portion of the driveway near the garage and corresponds with the path leading from the driveway to the front door. Brick foundation; vertical board wood siding.

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10 Tavano Road (90.10-3-20); 1 contributing building

Wood frame single-story dwelling with an irregular and roughly T-shaped footprint and low-pitched gable roof, oriented with its principal elevation facing northwards towards Tavano Road. The house's roof ridge is oriented on a north-to-south axis and corresponds with the westernmost block, in which the principal rooms are located, the façade of which presents as a gabled and glazed mass with a raised brick basement below. The entrance is located in a short hyphen which serves to connect the west and east blocks, the latter which forms the "stem" of the T plan in combination with the hyphen. The low and broad roof of the west block is continued eastward over the hyphen and east block, which, on its east elevation, accommodates a two-car garage with corresponding overhead doors. A large patio is located on the west side elevation. This house is well screened from the roadside. Brick foundation; vertical board wood siding.

8 Tavano Road (90.10-3-19); 1 contributing building

Wood frame split-level dwelling with roughly rectangular but irregular footprint and broad low-pitched gable roof, oriented with its principal elevation facing northwards towards Tavano Road. The house's primary entrance is located in a tall glazed expanse that rises from grade to roofline and which is offset on the façade, immediately astride the north-to-south roof ridge. That portion of the façade east of this entrance feature is recessed from the remainder of the elevation, allowing for additional glazing on east return wall adjacent to the entrance. To the west of the entrance bay and corresponding with upper-level living space are two paired windows in addition to a second larger paired window with clerestory window above, located near the building's northwest corner; to the east, on the recessed portion of the façade, are two paired windows with corresponding clerestory windows above. The east elevation has an elevated porch which, as with the other houses, creates a sheltered space below, at grade. On the opposite west elevation is located a two-bay automobile garage with overhead doors. The façade has vertical board wood siding and a patterned concrete block foundation wall; the deeply projecting eaves are embellished with expressed purlin tails. Concrete block foundation; vertical board wood siding.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

**ARCHITECTURE**

**COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

**Period of Significance**

1965-69

**Significant Dates**

1965; 1966; 1967; 1968; 1969

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Wenning, Henry; architect

Robins, Marcel G.; developer

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The cited period of significance, 1965-69, directly corresponds with the physical development of the Robinwood subdivision and the construction of its contributing housing stock.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Robinwood Historic District is an architecturally significant and highly intact suburban housing development consisting of a related group of mid-century Modern houses erected in the 1960s in the Town of Ossining, Westchester County, New York. This noteworthy developer-architect collaboration resulted in the construction of 21 dwellings the design and setting of which was conceived as an optimal suburban community. Few houses exhibiting the Modern aesthetic of the post-Second World War era which these dwellings portray were constructed in the town, outside of the area contained within the villages of Ossining or Briarcliff Manor, thereby marking them as a relatively rare and distinctive group. Conceived and built by architect Henry Wenning during a period in which developers were more inclined to construct houses of the ranch, split-level and traditional types, the district homes offered designs with more distinctive Modern references and which were stylistically contemporary and well integrated with their environment. At Robinwood, Modernist concepts of the period were foundational to the design of the houses. Geometric shapes with post-and-beam construction and large window expanses and careful siting maximized the interaction between the interior of the houses and the natural landscape immediately outside, with open floor plans, clerestory windows, and the extensive use of wood, as well as glass, being signature features of Wenning's designs. Although some of the house designs have a degree of repetition, others exhibit more unique and distinctive qualities which addressed their specific location and topography. Wenning incorporated the best qualities necessary for efficient and economical construction with a design aesthetic that reads as clearly today as when the dwellings were constructed; they function as seamlessly today as when they were built and thus remain relevant to contemporary lifestyles. The Robinwood Historic District has been deemed both architecturally and historically significant. It is being nominated in association with Criterion A, in the area of Community Planning & Development, for its associations with post-Second World War suburban housing development in Westchester County, and is additionally being nominated in association with Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as an intact, cohesive and significant collection of mid-century Modern dwellings erected as part of a comprehensive development scheme to the designs of Wenning in collaboration with developer Marcel G. Robins.

*Chronological History of Ossining & the Robinwood Subdivision Property*

The Robinwood housing development was constructed in the mid-1960s in the Town of Ossining, Westchester County, a suburban community located on the northern periphery of the greater New York City region. Westchester County was one of the original 12 counties of the Province of New York and was created by an act

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of the first Provincial Assembly of New York in 1683.<sup>1</sup> European settlement began in the late eighteenth century when the lands on the eastern side of the Hudson River were purchased in 1685 from the Sint Sinck Indians. These lands were part of the estate of Frederick Philipse and became the Manor of Philipsburg by royal charter in 1693. The first lord of the manor, Frederick Philipse (1626-1702), owned all of the land between the Hudson and Bronx rivers from Spuyten Duyvil Creek to the Croton River.<sup>2</sup> Tenant farmers settled the land, made improvements and worked the soil, while Philipse controlled the commercial interests of his property. He profited from the various docks, mills, and commerce associated with his land holdings and thus obtained considerable wealth. The third and final Lord of Philipse Manor was Col. Frederick Philipse III (1720-1785). During the Revolutionary War, Col. Philipse was a Loyalist who supported the Crown and, as a result, was charged with treason and forfeited his lands. In 1779, his estate was seized by the Commissioners of Forfeitures. Between 1784 and 1786, the commissioners auctioned the confiscated property.<sup>3</sup> First right of purchase was offered to the tenant farmers, provided they could demonstrate their loyalty to the Patriot cause and had the financial ability to make the purchase.

In 1788, the State of New York passed two acts that established counties, which were then divided into townships. The Town of Mount Pleasant was formed from a part of the northern portion of the former Philipsburg Manor. The Village of Sing Sing—the present-day Village of Ossining—was incorporated in 1813. In 1845, the Town of Ossining was set off from Mount Pleasant, which encompassed the Village of Sing Sing and most of what would become the Village of Briarcliff Manor.<sup>4</sup> The name Sing Sing was derived from the Native American term *Sint Sinck*, meaning rocky place or rock upon rock.

In December 1785, John Smith purchased the tenant farm he had worked up until that time. The purchase included a house situated on 239 acres of land, bounded on the northwest by a tributary of the Kill Brook and the farms of Jacob and Jesse Ryder. Smith died about 1793 and the farm passed to his son, Caleb. By 1799, the Smith farm and James Young occupied the south side of the brook and extended eastward to the town line between Mount Pleasant and New Castle. Release and sale of the former tenant lands such as that made by Smith facilitated development and commerce and in turn led to the need for improved roads, which were necessary for conveying cattle and crops to market. To provide a better route for goods to and from the Hudson River docks at Sing Sing, the Croton Turnpike Company acquired lands on the southeast side of the Kill Brook

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<sup>1</sup> Frederic Shonnard and W.W. Spooner, *History of Westchester County New York From its Earliest Settlement to the Year 1900 for the New York History Company* (New York: The Winthrop Press, 1900), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Martha Rowell Mesiti, *The Ossining Story: A Bicentennial Celebration 1813-1845* (Ossining: Village of Ossining Bicentennial Celebration, 2013), 27.

<sup>3</sup> Mesiti, *The Ossining Story: A Bicentennial Celebration*.

<sup>4</sup> Mesiti, *The Ossining Story: A Bicentennial Celebration*.

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for construction of a toll road. This road, known variously as the Croton Turnpike, the Somerstown Turnpike and the Somerstown Road (State Route 133), passed through the Smith family's farm land. The new road diverted traffic from the old Sing Sing Road that extended through the Ryder farms along present-day Campwoods Road, Ryder Road, and Pinesbridge Road. Chartered in 1800, the Westchester Turnpike was the county's first commercial toll road; it extended through Pelham and New Rochelle and also connected with roadways extending into southern New England. The first turnpike through Ossining was the Highland Turnpike (Albany Post Road/U.S. Route 9), which was chartered in 1806. The Croton Turnpike followed shortly after the establishment of these other regional routes. Chartered in April 1807, the Croton Turnpike crossed the northern portion of the county and connected Somers to the Highland Turnpike, a short distance uphill from the Hudson River waterfront. These turnpikes became public roads by the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

As the nineteenth century progressed the area's farms were actively being divided into smaller parcels. The Brookside Tavern was established on the Croton Turnpike at its intersection with the road to the Ryder farms and the old road to Sing Sing, called Brookside Lane. On the south side of the turnpike, the west half of the Smith farm was purchased by Orison Blunt and there a large brick house was constructed. Abram Hyatt acquired the east half of the farm, formerly owned by Pugsley and Smith, portions of which he subsequently sold off. In 1860, Abram Hyatt sold a 22.5-acre lot to Ambrose Sutton. This particular lot, which would later be developed as the Robinwood enclave, was sold in 1866 by Sutton to Mary M. Ryder.

The Brookside Trotting Park was established on the Ryder-owned lot in the late 1860s and is depicted on the Beers atlas map published in 1868. According to former Ossining historian Greta Cornell, "As early as 1868 local bettors were cheering winners in the old Brookside Trotting Park. 'Straight and sulky races as well as bicycle events attracted the sporting crowd for miles around.'"<sup>6</sup> This race track would continue in active use into the twentieth century. In 1882, Oscar S. Bailey purchased the associated lot, which he held until 1889, when the property reverted back to Mary Ryder. She in turn sold the property to her son, Morris L. Ryder, in 1899. Fanny Cumming Baker purchased the property in 1904 and sold it to Henry T. Dykman [sic] of White Plains in 1912. Maps of the period depict the race track under Dyckman's ownership. With Dyckman unable to meet his financial obligations, in 1916 the Brooklyn Trust Company became trustee of the property.

In 1920, P. Thure Brorstrom purchased the tract from the Brooklyn Trust Company and the following year purchased additional lands from Fanny Baker. Dr. Frank Haines David (1879-1967) began the acquisition of

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<sup>5</sup> Philip Field Horne, *A Land of Peace* (Ossining, New York: The Jug Tavern of Sparta, Inc., Revised ed. 2015), 31; *Westchester County, History 1783-1865: The Pastoral Life*.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in James Feron, "Westchester Journal," *The New York Times*, 7 October 1979.



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property on the south side of the road in 1921. Over the course of the next decade, David acquired the former 22-acre race track property and several adjoining parcels from Lawrence Michaels, Irene Barnes, Grace Figsby, Melvin Stokes, and Alma Stolpp, thereby accumulating a land holding of over 100 acres that stretched from the Croton Turnpike—renamed the Somerstown Road and later yet State Route 133—to Morningside Drive. On the property several buildings were constructed of fieldstone, among them a main house, a gate house, a caretaker's cottage, various other ancillary buildings, and two ponds.

Frank Haines David was born in New York City, the only son of Henry David and Sarah Henrietta Shoemaker. He attended Columbia University and graduated with a degree in medicine in 1903, and in 1913 he married Mabel Gripp. The couple had four children: Marguerite May; Frank H. Jr.; Catherine Louise; and Sarah Henrietta. David worked for the New York City Health Department as a school physician and subsequently went into private practice, maintaining his medical offices in New York City. Directories suggest that David maintained a New York City address, while the state and federal censuses record the family as residing at the Ossining address beginning in 1925. In 1933, Frank H. and Mabel David deeded the Ossining property to their four children, though maintaining lifetime tenancy. Catherine and her sister, (Sarah) Henrietta, both married and remained at the Ossining property with their spouses.

Over a period that extended through the Depression and continued into the post–Second World War period, the David family sold off a series of parcels from their larger holding. Included in the sales of the David holdings was the 1945 purchase of a tract of land by the O.S.G. Realty Corporation which was bound by covenants and restrictions that limited future development to residential use. In 1964, the property referenced in the 1945 conveyance was acquired by Harry Glasgall as the successor to the O.S.G. Realty Corporation. Glasgall soon thereafter sold the parcel, which was purchased by Edward Kienitz and Eric Peterson Jr. of White Plains. In 1964, Kienitz and Peterson had the tract platted into 22 building lots by surveyor W.A. Slater. The subdivision—depicted on a map entitled “Subdivision of Property Situate in the Town of Ossining, Westchester Co., N.Y.,” and known as Somerstown Estates—was filed with the county on November 6; on November 19 Kienitz and Peterson sold the tract to the A & D Construction Corporation.

A & D Construction was one of several companies owned by developer and builder Marcel G. Robins (1923–2010), who served as the company's president. After serving with the British Army in the Jewish Infantry Brigade Group during the latter stages of the Second World War, Robins immigrated to New York and settled in Briarcliff Manor. He was an active developer in Westchester County, sometimes undertaking projects in collaboration with other builders and architects. In the mid-1950s Fenway Estates, Inc. developed the Hanover Acres subdivision in Scarsdale, Westchester County. Robins, serving as president of that venture, partnered with

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Boris Krawzenko to build the Scarsdale houses. Robins later moved to North Carolina, around 1970, where he continued to work as a contractor, overseeing the construction of commercial properties.<sup>7</sup>

Robins made necessary improvements to the Somerstown Road property in Ossining to prepare for the property's development; these including the construction of a road and the installation of other infrastructure. In January 1965, Robins signed an agreement with Consolidated Edison Company of New York to supply electricity throughout the Ossining development. According to the details of this easement, the street was then under construction and the associated lots were available for development and sale. Robins changed the name of the project from Somerstown Estates to Robinwood and in collaboration with an architect, Harry Wenning, began to design the homes that would populate it. The first four houses were completed in 1965. Six followed in 1966, and five more were completed in 1967. By 1968 all of the Robinwood development houses, except one which was finished in 1969, had been erected.<sup>8</sup> The houses constituting the development were initially marketed for sale at prices ranging from \$40,000 to \$70,000.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the new dwellings then under construction, the original stone gate house associated with the former David family estate was parceled off as one of the development's 22 associated lots. It was renovated, enlarged, and then sold. Another dwelling on the former estate was given access by means of Tavano Road, the name given to the cul-de-sac street which traversed the new development.

In 1965, while Robinwood was in the beginning stages of development, Robins undertook a sister project in nearby Briarcliff Manor called Scarborough Woods. Located off Long Hill Road on Holly Place, Scarborough Woods has 14 building lots with Contemporary-style houses similar in design to those in the Ossining development. As with Robinwood, the first homes erected at Scarborough Woods were also designed in collaboration with Harry Wenning. Wenning designed 14 houses for the project; however, of those, only eight were constructed by the close of the 1960s.<sup>10</sup>

*Suburban Development in Westchester County & The Suburban House*

In *Westchester the American Suburb*, historian Roger Panetta strove to emphasize the vital relationship shared by New York City and Westchester County.<sup>11</sup> The countryside beyond and north of the city was a valuable source of food and potable water, and was for a time largely agricultural in nature. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, the

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<sup>7</sup> *The Carrboro Citizen*, Marcel Robins obituary, 21 January 2010; *The Herald Statesman*, Westchester Homes and Real Estate, 26 August 1955; Westchester County Clerk, Westchester County Land Records Online.

<sup>8</sup> Westchester County Clerk, Westchester County Land Records online; Town of Ossining GIS.

<sup>9</sup> "Ship-Shape House for Water Site," *New York Times*, 25 June 1967.

<sup>10</sup> Westchester County Clerk, Westchester County Land Records; Town of Ossining GIS; Wenning Associates A.I.A.

<sup>11</sup> Roger Panetta, *Westchester the American Suburb* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 7.

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docks at Ossining village and the hamlet of Sparta competed for river-borne freighting and transportation business. Agricultural products arrived via the turnpikes to be conveyed by ship to New York City and returned with a variety of products desired by area consumers. After the first successful steamboat was built by American inventor Robert Fulton in 1807, navigation up and down the Hudson River followed a more regular schedule and travel between the city and Hudson riverfront communities in Westchester County and points north was greatly improved. The Village of Ossining grew from a modest waterfront hamlet, expanding up the hill and along the Highland Turnpike, known otherwise as the Albany Post Road. That road would become Broadway from New York City until it reached Ossining, where it is known as Highland Avenue. Beginning in the 1830s, great houses were built, primarily on the east side of the road, affording magnificent views of the Hudson River and its surroundings scenery.

October 1851 marked the completion of the Hudson River Railroad, which at that time opened its new rail line between Albany and New York City. Initially, the idea of a railroad traversing the banks of the Hudson River between New York and Albany was viewed by many as unworthy of consideration, mostly because of the difficulty and expense of construction through the Hudson Highlands and its perceived inability to compete with steamboat navigation. Although steamboats were known for their elegance and relative speed, navigation on the river for about three months each winter was closed due to ice. The railroad, on the other hand, could provide a superior mode of transportation to carry passengers and freight all year round without such a winter hiatus. In 1867, the Vanderbilt merger combined the Hudson River Railroad with the New York Central to form the New York Central & Hudson River Railroad.<sup>12</sup> By the latter decades of the nineteenth century the presence of the railroad had made regular commuting to New York City from Westchester County viable.

Concurrent with completion of the railroad, the once bountiful farms that checkered northern Westchester County began to decline in large measure as a result of two factors, competition with other agricultural areas and soil depletion. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 had depressed Eastern farming interests and drastically impacted wheat cultivation, which continued to shift westward in the state and beyond. The canal reduced the cost and time involved in the transportation of farm products from the distant west, and boats traveling it carried these products, along with flour, spirits, and lumber to market. The Erie's completion cinched New York City's place as the country's leading port, and it brought considerable economic growth and prosperity to the city, the state and areas to the west.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Thomas Ehrenreich, *The Hudson River and the Hudson River Railroad—1851*, Railroad Extra (2001).

<sup>13</sup>F. Daniel Larkin, *New York State Canals: A Short History* (Fleischmanns, N.Y.: Purple Mountain Press, 1998), 27-31.

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In Westchester County, the shift in farming commerce to the west opened up large tracts of land for residential development, a situation which was further enhanced by the arrival of the railroads. By the Civil War era, the county became an ideal location for seasonal and county homes for well-to-do families desiring a retreat from the burgeoning metropolitan area. Leaving the city to stay in the country during the summer months became increasingly popular and continued well into the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, tracts were acquired and subdivided into designed communities, among them Tarrytown Heights (1871), Rochelle Park (1871), River View Manor in Hastings (1870), Rochelle Heights (1905), Lawrence Park in Bronxville (1890), Park Hill in Yonkers (1889), and Philipse Manor in Sleepy Hollow (1890).<sup>15</sup> In their 1900 history of the county, Frederic Shonnard and W. W. Spooner described the merits of the area:

...the whole western border of the county both affords a splendid view of the entrancing panorama of the Hudson, and is perfectly accessible from the railroad, which runs along the bank of the river. Moreover, beyond the ridges in the interior the land has a uniform and gentle descent into lovely valleys, which permit convenient and rapid travel from all directions.... But every other part of the county—at least every part conveniently reached from the railroads—is also highly esteemed for select residence purposes; and, indeed, Westchester County throughout its extent is peculiarly a residential county.<sup>16</sup>

Kathleen LaFrank, in her NRHP documentation of the Usonia Historic District in nearby Pleasantville, confirmed Roger Panetta's observation that "Westchester had witnessed the dawn of the modern subdivision" by the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> Outside of Ossining village, the Town of Ossining (inclusive of Briarcliff Manor), and bordering areas in the Town of New Castle, remained primarily given over to estates and farms into the twentieth century. Briarcliff Manor was incorporated as a village and set off from the Town of Ossining in 1902; its boundaries were subsequently expanded in 1906. With the exception of suburban subdivisions in the Village of Ossining, most development in the "Town Outside"—as that portion of the Town of Ossining that is not within the incorporated villages of Ossining or Briarcliff is sometimes called—occurred after the Second World War. A similar wave of development took place in Briarcliff as well. Existing estates, such as property purchased in 1873 by Peter Donald, who established a gentleman's farm called Torbank, occupied large expanses. Torbank would remain in the Donald family until it was sold and subdivided into residential lots after the Second World War. The gentleman's farm and country house would continue into the twentieth century. Two examples are Chilmark, the country farm estate of V. Everit Macy (1896), and Haymount, built by

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<sup>14</sup>Marty Carswell, personal conversation with Deborah Van Steen (ca. 2000). Mr. Carswell was first introduced to the area when his family stayed here in the summers when he was a boy.

<sup>15</sup>Kathleen LaFrank, *Usonia Historic District, Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (2012), 8-6

<sup>16</sup>Shonnard and Spooner, *Westchester County*, 4.

<sup>17</sup>Quoted in Kathleen LaFrank, *Usonia*, 8-6.

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Williamson Fuller (1912). The first section of the Macy property set off and platted for development was undertaken by Macy through the Chilmark Park Realty Corporation in 1925, followed by a second wave of development. Likewise, a portion of the Haymount estate was subdivided as Morningside Homes in 1960.<sup>18</sup>

While Roger Panetta and others have illuminated the importance of the automobile and construction of the parkway as important aspects of these developments—this region was serviced by the Bronx River Parkway, the Saw Mill River Parkway, the Hutchinson River Parkway, the Sprain Brook Parkway and Taconic State Parkway, which combined to form a network of north-south routes through Westchester County to New York City—Ossining and the other towns in this region remained equally dependent on the railroad for commuter access to the city. In 1933, the Briarcliff-Peekskill Parkway was opened. The route (present-day State Route 9A) was designed by the Westchester County Parks Commission to relieve traffic on the Albany Post Road; it extends from the Saw Mill River Parkway and State Route 100 in Hawthorne to U.S. Route 9 in Ossining at the Croton River. Many area residents drove their cars to the station and boarded trains to make their way into New York City.

The best known of the post-Second World War developments in Westchester is Usonia Homes in nearby Pleasantville. It was there that 44 houses were built between 1948 and 1956 on a tract of 97 wooded acres; the last of the original residences was built in 1964. It should be noted that the Usonian concept and the prototype for the Usonia house dates to much earlier, having been developed in the 1930s. The design of the Usonia homes were executed by Frank Lloyd Wright, his apprentices and disciples, and so-called “non-Usonia architects” who were outside of Wright’s architectural circle.<sup>19</sup> Other architects active in northern Westchester during the post-Second World War building boom included Marcel Breuer, Don Reiman, Edward Larrabee Barnes, and Harry Wenning, among others. The most prominent of these architects generally worked on individual commissions. Developments that incorporated architect-driven designs with multiple-lot residential schemes of modern houses appeared with far less frequency. The post-war building boom is more closely aligned with the generic merchant-builder housing that consisted of blocks of mass-produced capes, ranches, and split-level homes.<sup>20</sup>

The rate of development across Westchester County in this period was seemingly unprecedented. Panetta indicated that between 1950 and 1970, the number of residences in the county increased by 40 percent and the

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<sup>18</sup>Deborah Van Steen in the *Observer*, newsletter of the Ossining Historical Society Museum Spring/Summer 2004; Deborah Van Steen, “Gentleman’s Country House and Farm, Haymount, Ossining, New York,” unpublished paper, 7 May 2012.

<sup>19</sup>Roland Reisely, *Usonia, New York: Building a Community with Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), xiii.

<sup>20</sup>La Frank, *Usonia*, 8-7; Panetta, *Westchester*, 59; see Edward P. Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

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population rose from 625,000 to over 800,000.<sup>21</sup> In *The New Suburban History*, Kevin Kruse and Thomas Sugrue introduced their work with the impact of the “rise and dominance of suburbia” after the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> One-quarter of all Americans lived in suburbs in 1950; by 1960, that number had steadily risen to one-third. The authors noted that contemporary historians, cultural, social, and architectural critics in the 1950s considered suburbia as being in essence homogeneous, conformist, and bourgeois. Lewis Mumford observed the unidentifiable sameness of uniform and unidentifiable houses occupied by the same socioeconomic group.<sup>23</sup> Kathleen LaFrank summarized the era in the following terms:

One of the most dramatic periods of suburban development in Westchester (and the United States more broadly) was the post-World War II housing boom. This boom was influenced by increased automobile ownership, advanced building technology, and a severe shortage of housing, in part precipitated by millions of returning veterans eager to marry and start families...Moreover, the suburbs beckoned, promising a new and improved version of the American dream, where everyone could own their own home and private backyard. The sudden proliferation of government-funded highways made that dream easier to reach. Government funding brought the dream of home ownership to more and more Americans, as programs like the Federal Administration worked to “stimulate the moderate-cost private-housing market.”<sup>24</sup>

The national historic context for post–Second World War, mid-century housing, demonstrates that the number of new housing starts during the era were staggering. New housing starts between 1940 and 1949 were 7,443,000. During the next decade, housing starts between 1950 and 1959 peaked at 15,068,000. In the following decade, from 1960 to 1969, new housing starts slowed from the 1950s high; however, they remained substantial at 14,063,800, twice the 1949 level.<sup>25</sup>

The housing boom also, to quote another source, “demonstrated the possibilities offered by large-scale production, prefabrication methods and materials, and streamlined assembly methods.”<sup>26</sup> The model that best exemplifies the possibilities of scale and economy was Levittown, in Nassau County on New York’s Long Island. Begun in 1947, William Levitt, the project’s progenitor, is credited as the first to apply these principles. He created America’s first large-scale suburb, building more than 17,500 dwellings that eventually housed some 82,000 people. Levitt successfully reduced construction costs “by simplifying the house, assembling many

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<sup>21</sup>Panetta, *Westchester*, 59.

<sup>22</sup>Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, *The New Suburban History* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>23</sup>Kruse and Sugrue, *New Suburban*, 3.

<sup>24</sup>LaFrank, *Usonia*, 8-7 - 8-8.

<sup>25</sup>Emily Pettis; National Research Council (U.S.), Transportation Research Board, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Federal Highway Administration, *A model for identifying and evaluating the historic significance of post-World War II housing*, Report (National Cooperative Highway Research Program), 723, Project No. 08-77 (Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board, 2012), 99.

<sup>26</sup>David L. Ames, Linda Flint McClelland, National Register of Historic Places, *Historic Residential suburbs guidelines for evaluation and documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2002), 65.

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components off-site, and turning the construction site into a streamlined assembly line.”<sup>27</sup> Thus, conditions resulted in a “concerted and organized effort” by many, including the federal government, to produce an affordable single-family house.<sup>28</sup> While not all suburban development followed such a repetitive model as that presented by Levittown, many nevertheless did. So prolific were the builder houses of the era that an entire report was generated to address survey and evaluation of non-architect designed suburban housing—a national historic context for Post–Second World War, mid-century modern housing.<sup>29</sup>

The most popular styles reflected a synthesis of American ideals with historic identity. The Cape Cod house and the various adaptations of other time-honored Colonial forms were representative of a compact and inexpensive home that was evocative of the early American vernacular house. Examples were widely published and much seized upon. Conversely, the suburban Ranch-type house, popularized during the 1950s, represented the “nation’s growing fascination with the informal lifestyle of the West Coast,” and preferences driven by growing incomes and the functional needs of families.<sup>30</sup> Levitt and Sons combined features in their designs to make them more appealing to the public at large. In middle and upper-income developments, builders looked to the houses of the American Southwest as models. Such houses combined modern features, among them sliding glass doors, picture windows, exposed timbers and beams, and carports. Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Richard J. Neutra, Mies van der Rohe, and other Modernist architects inspired new uses for modern materials. In New Canaan, Connecticut, Breuer, Landis Gores, John Johansen, Philip Johnson, and Eliot Noyes—a group collectively known as the Harvard Five—designed houses between 1947 and 1966 that featured the straightforward and forthright use of glass, concrete, and wood, for both themselves and their clients. William Earles, in his study of the Harvard Five, quotes *House & Home* magazine, which declared that “New Canaan has become a household word in many parts of the world.”<sup>31</sup> These architects represented a transitional period at Harvard during which time its architectural curriculum witnessed a considerable shift, from the traditional and longstanding Beaux Arts-based curriculum to a more modern one, thereby becoming the first American architectural school to employ the new Bauhaus teaching methodology. Many of the New Canaan moderns, as the homes are collectively known, were designed on relatively modest budgets. The contemporary home established new solutions to livable space. In the NRHP bulletin on *Historic Residential Suburbs*, David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland described the influence of the Modernist architects, who, in their words:

...inspired many architects to look to new solutions for liveable [sic] homes using modern materials of glass,

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<sup>27</sup>Ames, 65-66.

<sup>28</sup>Ames, 66.

<sup>29</sup>Pettis, *post-World War II housing*.

<sup>30</sup>Ames et al, *Historic Residential suburbs*, 66.

<sup>31</sup>William D. Earles A.I.A., *The Harvard Five in New Canaan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), inside cover.



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steel, and concrete, and principles of organic design that utilized cantilevered forms, glass curtain walls, and post-and-beam construction. The contemporary home featured the integration of indoor and outdoor living area and open floor plans, which allowed for a sense of flowing space. Characteristics such as masonry hearth walls, patios and terraces, carports, and transparent walls in the form of sliding glass doors and floor-to-ceiling windows became the hallmarks of the contemporary residential design.<sup>32</sup>

Beginning in the 1930s, the American public was broadly exposed to the concepts of European Modernism through exhibits like the Museum of Modern Art exhibition (1932) and The Century of Progress World's Fair at Chicago (1933). Starting in the 1940s and extending into the 1960s a series of publications and articles provided design inspiration, introduced new concepts and materials, analyzed cost considerations and addressed the siting and landscaping of new homes. In 1940, James and Katherine Ford began publishing their *Modern House in America*; architectural publications featured Modernist architect-designed homes; and organizations, like the Home Builders Association of Westchester, held exhibitions designed to introduce materials and contractors. In 1953, John Callender and the Architectural League of New York published *Before You Buy a House*, which featured Modernist dwellings from across the country. The following year, Katherine Ford and Thomas Creighton released *Quality Budget Houses: A Treasury of 100 Architect-Designed Houses from \$5,000 to \$20,000*, which also featured the modern home with advice on siting, materials, and design. On the West Coast, the *Case Study Houses, 1945-1962*, published in 1962 as *Modern California Houses*, provided examples and design ideas.<sup>33</sup>

Following Harvard's example other leading architectural schools in the United States began to replace the long-entrenched ideals of Beaux-Arts classicism with more modern Bauhaus principles. Likewise, preparation for the coming Second World War also played a pivotal role. The war was a transformative event for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), given that wartime federal funding provided for research in the hard sciences. The expansion of research capabilities at MIT was influenced by its "intellectual landscape." The study of architecture, however, was not limited to a specific aesthetic—its Modernist architectural scholars and practitioners explored new uses for materials, solar-power, and pre-fabricated buildings. In an article on how MIT helped to shape post-World War Two architecture, Peter Dizikes cited architectural historian Arindam Dutta: "This new "primacy of funded research" would move academic architects "towards a 'problem-solving' and relevance-seeking mentality, transforming the very sense of their discipline."<sup>34</sup> Dutta noted that "The

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<sup>32</sup>Ames et al, *Historic Residential suburbs*, 67.

<sup>33</sup>Ames et al, *Historic Residential suburbs*; John Hancock Callender, the Architectural League of New York, Southwest Research Institute, *Before You Buy a House* (New York: Crown Publisher, Inc., 1953); Katherine Morrow Ford and Thomas H. Creighton, *Quality Budget Houses* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1954); Esther McCoy, *Case Study Houses 1945-1962*, first published in 1962 as *Modern California Houses* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1977); Home Builders Association of Westchester, Home-A-Rama: Westchester's Spectacular Exhibition of Residential Housing Progress, October 1956.

<sup>34</sup>Peter Dizikes, *Thoroughly Modern MIT*, April 23, 2014.

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architects themselves are undergoing a kind of [evolution] at this point, because this is the moment that modernism is finding a home in America in a very strong way.”<sup>35</sup>

*Architectural Context: Harry Wenning & the Design of the Robinwood Houses*

Harry Wenning (1928-2012) was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in the later 1920s. A graduate of Bloomfield High School, Wenning attended the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in math with a minor in fine arts in 1949. Following graduation, Wenning attended MIT, where he earned a Bachelor of Architecture degree with a minor in Building Engineering and Construction in 1952.<sup>36</sup> Following the completion of his MIT education, Wenning was hired by the International Petroleum Corporation, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey, and was assigned to work in Peru, South America. In Peru he worked as an architect and construction supervisor, designing housing, schools, public buildings, churches, sewage treatment plants and roads—according to his obituary, he designed everything that was required to build a new company city for a population of 40,000 inhabitants. After two years in Peru, Wenning, by then 26 years of age, was drafted into military service and served two years, predominantly in the European theatre in Germany, as a map editor.<sup>37</sup>

Upon his return to the United States, Wenning settled in Westchester County, and he initially worked for an architectural office located in White Plains. Upon earning his architect’s license in 1961, he established his own practice, Wenning Architects, AIA, in Hartsdale. In 1966, the firm moved to a new building designed by the firm, the Wen-Ro Building in Hastings. Wenning and his professional associates—his wife, Doris Wenning, an interior designer, and brother John Wenning Jr., a structural engineer—fielded commissions for a range of projects inclusive of schools, churches, office buildings, restaurants, homes, and residential developments. It appears Wenning embraced the scientific, social, and aesthetic research explored at MIT during his time there. According to Wenning himself, “Specialization meant stagnation.”<sup>38</sup> By 1966, Wenning was credited with what was noted as “wide diversity in his career,” which spanned everything from a single-room residential addition to an 1,800-acre planned development near Fishkill, New York. Wenning excelled at design solutions for difficult and problematic sites, and in that context completed custom homes located on steep and wooded slopes.<sup>39</sup> Several of his projects were featured in articles published in the *New York Times* as well as local publications, often with photographs of the referenced house.

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<sup>35</sup>Dutta, in Dizikes, *Modern MIT*.

<sup>36</sup>Harry Wenning, personal conversation with Deborah Van Steen (October 2009); Wenning Associates A.I.A. Booklet of Work, n.d.; Harry Wenning obituary, *Poughkeepsie Journal*, 26 August 2012.

<sup>37</sup>Wenning obituary *Poughkeepsie Journal*.

<sup>38</sup>*The Hastings News*, “Wenning’s Architectural Range: The Simplex, Duplex, or Complex,” 7 April 1966, 19.

<sup>39</sup>Glen Fowler, “Steep, Rocky Slope Challenges Westchester Architect,” *The New York Times*, 8 September 1963.

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During a period in which developers were inclined to construct ranches, split levels, and traditional-influenced houses, Wenning's designs offered distinctly Modern references, were stylistically contemporary, and addressed their specific siting in a thoughtful and sensitive manner. At Robinwood, the Modern architectural concepts of the period were central to the design of the houses Wenning developed. Geometric shapes with post-and-beam construction, large glazed expanses and clerestory windows, well-thought out siting which provided the maximum interaction between the interior of the house and natural landscape outside, open concept floor plans, and the extensive use of wood inside and out were signature features of the Robinwood houses. While some of the house designs have a degree of repetition which serves in some ways to provide a unified theme for the grouping, others exhibit more unique qualities which served to address their specific location and its topography, thereby offering a level of individuality. Wenning incorporated the best qualities necessary for efficient and economical construction with a design aesthetic that reads as clearly today as when the homes were constructed in the 1960s.

The house at 5 Tavano Road, among the more distinctive of the Wenning-designed houses in the development—a portion of the rear elevation, corresponding with the living room within, is projected in striking fashion out over an accompanying pond— was highlighted in an article published in the *New York Times* in 1967 entitled “Ship-Shape House for Water Site.”<sup>40</sup> As noted by the piece's author, Franklin Whitehouse, “With a little imagination, it is possible to sit in the living room of a new three-bedroom house in Ossining, N.Y., and believe one is in a boat, about to sail.”

Shaped in plan like the prow of a ship, the living room juts out over a small pond in Robinwood, a development of 21 houses being completed by Marcel G. Robins.

Slim steel columns anchored in underwater piers support the living room and a 90-foot-long cantilevered deck that runs along two sides of the room.

The glass-enclosed room is two stories high under a triangular sloping roof. The point of the roof is three stories above the pond, which is 200 feet long, about 55 feet wide and 6 feet deep. The pond, included in the \$67,900 price of the house, is stocked with fish.

A flat roof covers a kitchen, den, foyer and the bedrooms, which, like the living room, are all at street level. An unfinished basement playroom opens onto a patio on the pond side of the sloping one-acre site.

The cream-colored stucco house is of redwood post-and-beam construction, which allows maximum use of glass walls.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>“Ship-Shape House.”

<sup>41</sup>“Ship-Shape House.”

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That house is among those which most saliently portrays Wenning's integration of building with site at Robinwood; and while its principal elevation presents as a low, single-story construct, the rear of the house, projected out over the pond, instead opens up as a multi-story construct culminating in the tall glazed expanse of the living room.

Two of Wenning's other Robinwood's designs—the houses at 9 and 10 Tavano Road—had been highlighted in the *New York Times* the year prior, in an article entitled "Development in Ossining Offers Homes with Exteriors of Redwood and Glass."<sup>42</sup> The house at 9 Tavano Road, a five-bedroom dwelling priced contemporarily at \$48,500, featured a number of features characteristic of the Robinwood development, among them geometric massing in combination with a low-pitched gable roof with deeply projecting eaves, concrete block and post-and-beam construction, exterior redwood siding, and large glazed expanses. On the main upper living level, the living and dining room open directly onto a large porch with views of the accompanying landscape. Downstairs are two bedrooms astride a larger recreation room, with a two-bay automobile garage and storage area rounding out the plan. Ten Tavano Road, another variant employing many of the same architectural devices and features, was a four-bedroom model priced at \$52,500. On the lower level the living room and dining room were not connected, while the kitchen—which in the previous example was sequestered from the dining area—was incorporated into a family room on the opposite side of the plan from the living room, the dining room being located between these two larger rooms. Both houses featured fireplaces as central components of the living room.

Among the more seemingly unique houses within the district is that at 18 Tavano Road, which was built above a compact square-shaped plan and banked into its undulating site so as to allow for a garage bay at grade on the east elevation. It features a low hipped roof which rises towards the center to accommodate a central skylight. The houses at 24 and 26 Tavano Road are of yet another type, being low slung with very shallow or flat roofs and decidedly rectilinear in their overall lines. While rendered in different terms and with a variety of massing and spatial solutions, the interiors of the various Robinwood houses nevertheless exhibit a number of ubiquitous features, among them expressed post-and-beam construction, softwood ceilings, sheetrock walls, hardwood flooring and Roman brick fireplaces.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information**

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<sup>42</sup>*New York Times*, "Development in Ossining Offers Homes with Exteriors of Redwood and Glass," 31 July 1966.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 24.35 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 598704 4558765  
Zone Easting Northing

2 18 598640 4558508  
Zone Easting Northing

3 18 598199 4558651  
Zone Easting Northing

4 18 598101 4558778  
Zone Easting Northing

5 18 598103 4558785  
Zone Easting Northing

6 18 598154 4558851  
Zone Easting Northing

7 18 598599 4558797  
Zone Easting Northing

8 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for this NRHP historic district nomination is depicted on the enclosed mapping, which was drawn at a scale of 1: 24,000, 1: 12,000 and 1: 4,000. All maps are entitled "Robinwood Historic District, Ossining, Westchester County, New York."

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the Robinwood Historic District was drawn to reflect historic circumstances and the cited period of significance, 1965-1969. The boundary corresponds with the original Robinwood subdivision plan and thus contains no additional or "buffer" land; all of the acreage contained within the boundary is related to the historic development of Tavano Road in the mid to later 1960s.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Deborah Van Steen and William E. Krattinger (NYS Division for Historic Preservation)

organization NYS Division for Historic Preservation

date June 2018

street & number PO Box 189

telephone (518) 268-2167

city or town Waterford

state NY

zip code 12188

e-mail William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Photographs by William E. Krattinger, April 2017

TIFF file format, original digital files at NYS Division for Historic Preservation, Waterford NY 12188.

001 5 Tavano Road, view looking north  
002 8 Tavano Road, view looking south  
003 9 Tavano Road, view looking north  
004 12 Tavano Road, view looking south  
005 15 Tavano Road, view looking north  
006 18 Tavano Road, view looking south  
007 22 Tavano Road, view looking to southwest  
008 26 Tavano Road, view looking to northeast  
009 26 Tavano Road, view looking east  
010 30 Tavano Road, view looking east  
011 24 Tavano Road, view looking east  
012 20 Tavano Road, view looking south  
013 7 Tavano Road, view looking north  
014 11 Tavano Road, view looking north

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name VARIOUS; historic district

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



**ROBINWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT**

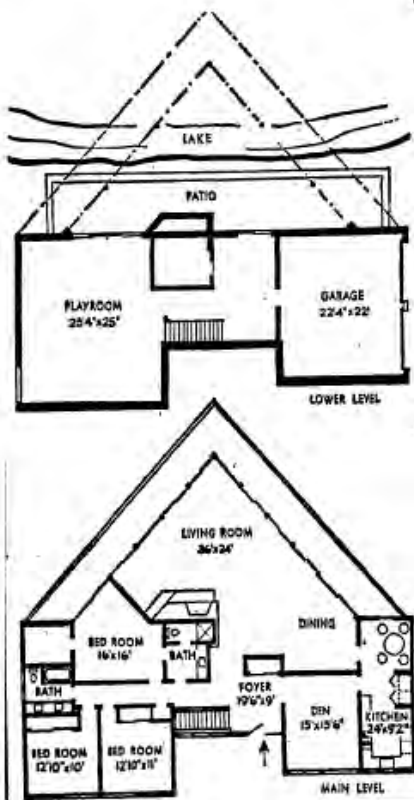
Name of Property

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Three-bedroom house designed by Harry Wenning is priced at \$67,900 at Robinwood, a home development in Ossining, N. Y. Living room and cantilevered sun-decks are supported by steel columns.



## Ship-Shape House for Water Site

By FRANKLIN WHITEHOUSE

With a little imagination, it is possible to sit in the living room of a new three-bedroom house in Ossining, N. Y., and believe one is in a boat about to sail.

Shaped in plan like the prow of a ship, the living room juts out over a small pond in Robinwood, a development of 21 houses being completed by Marcel G. Robins.

Slim steel columns anchored in underwater piers support the living room and a 90-foot-long cantilevered deck that runs along two sides of the room.

The glass-enclosed room is two stories high under a triangular sloping roof. The point of the roof is three stories

above the pond, which is 200 feet long, about 55 feet wide and 6 feet deep. The pond, included in the \$67,900 price of the house, is stocked with fish.

A flat roof covers a kitchen, den, foyer and the bedrooms, which, like the living room, are all at street level. An unfinished basement playroom opens onto a patio on the pond side of the sloping site.

The cream-colored stucco house is of redwood post-and-beam construction, which allows maximum use of glass walls.

The architect is Harry Wenning of Hartsdale, N. Y. The development, in which houses are priced from \$40,000 to \$70,000, is located off Tavano Road near Route 133.

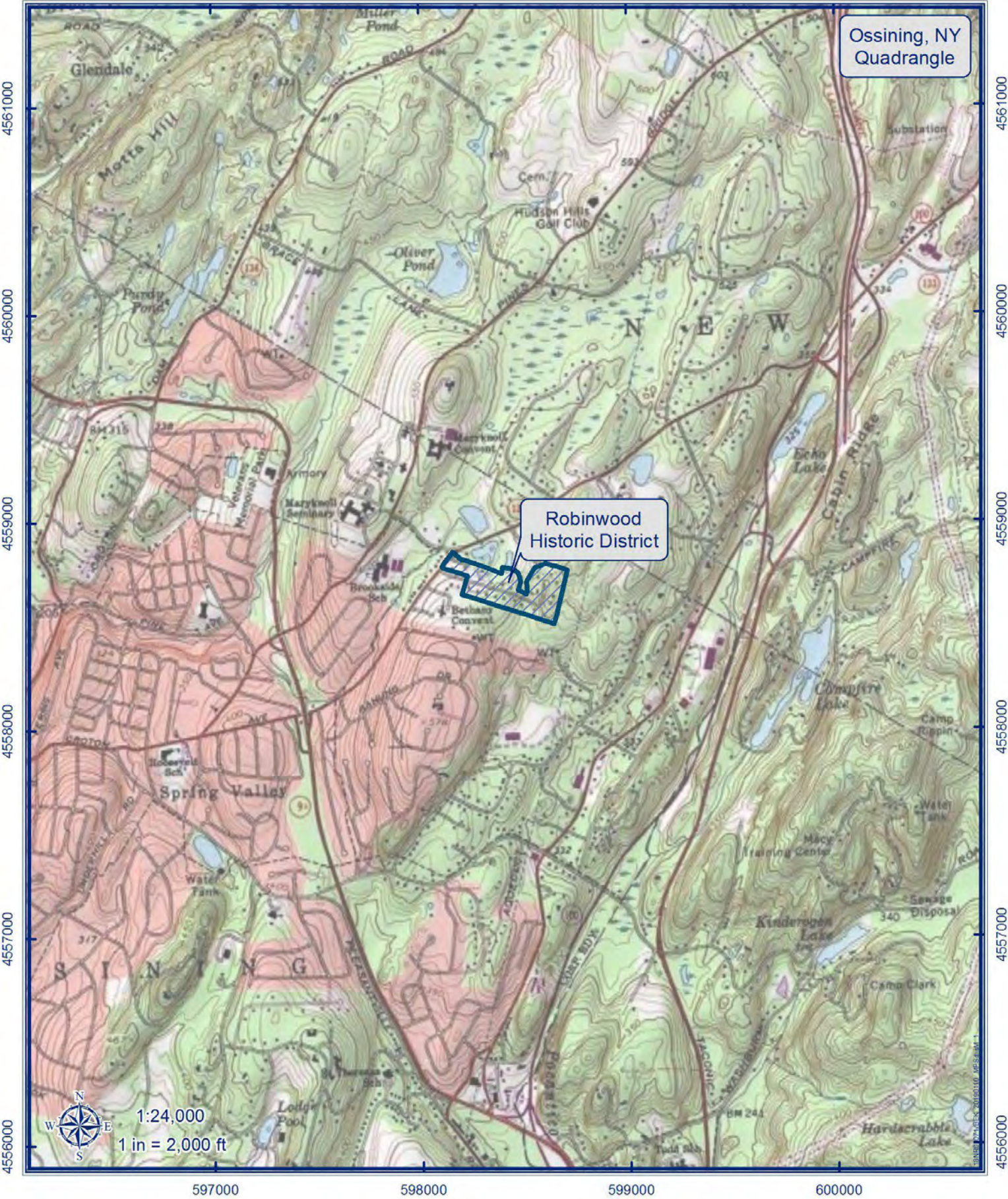
The New York Times  
Published: June 25, 1967  
Copyright © The New York Times

ABOVE, *New York Times*, June 1967.

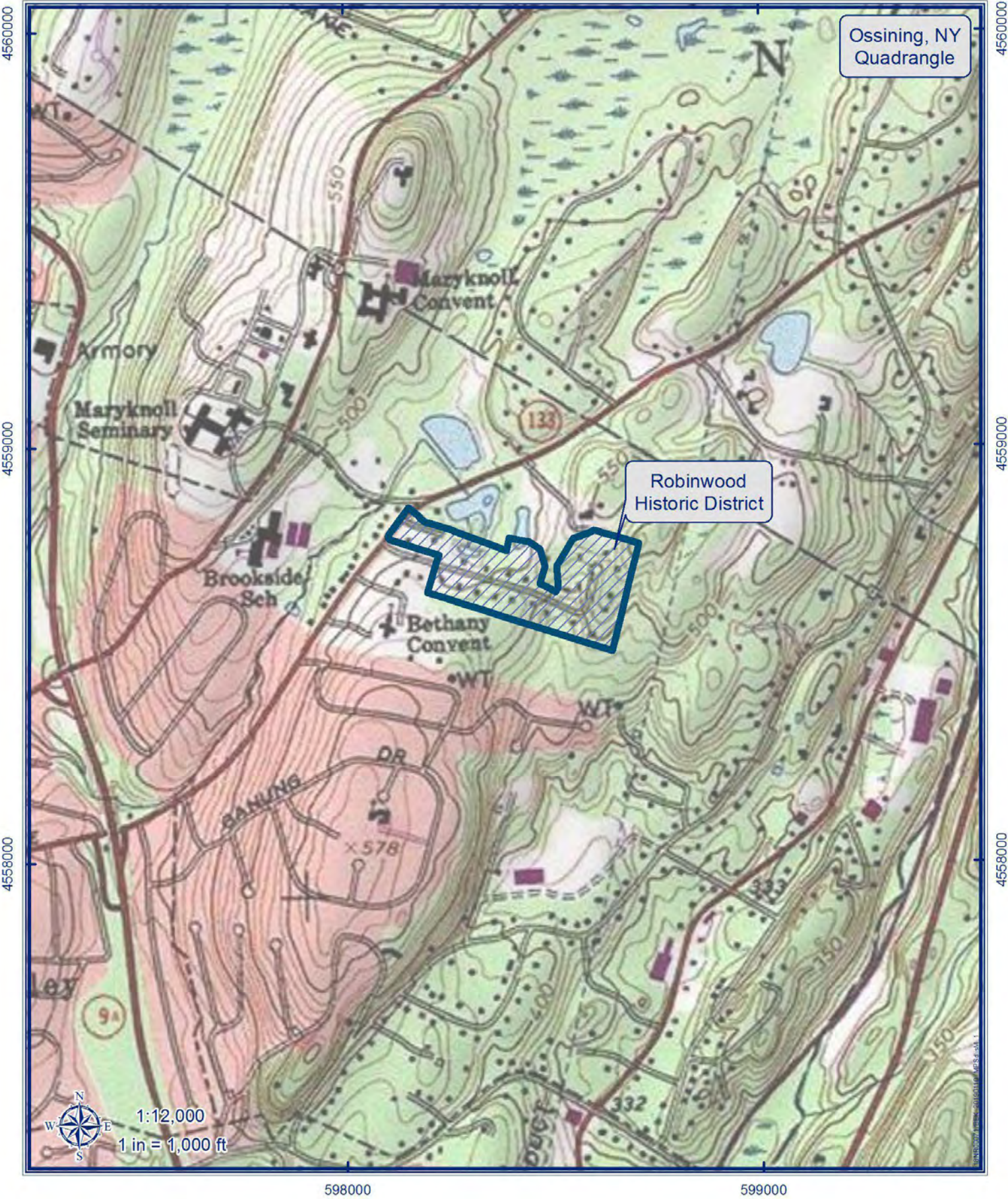
WESTCHESTER CO., N.Y.

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Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter

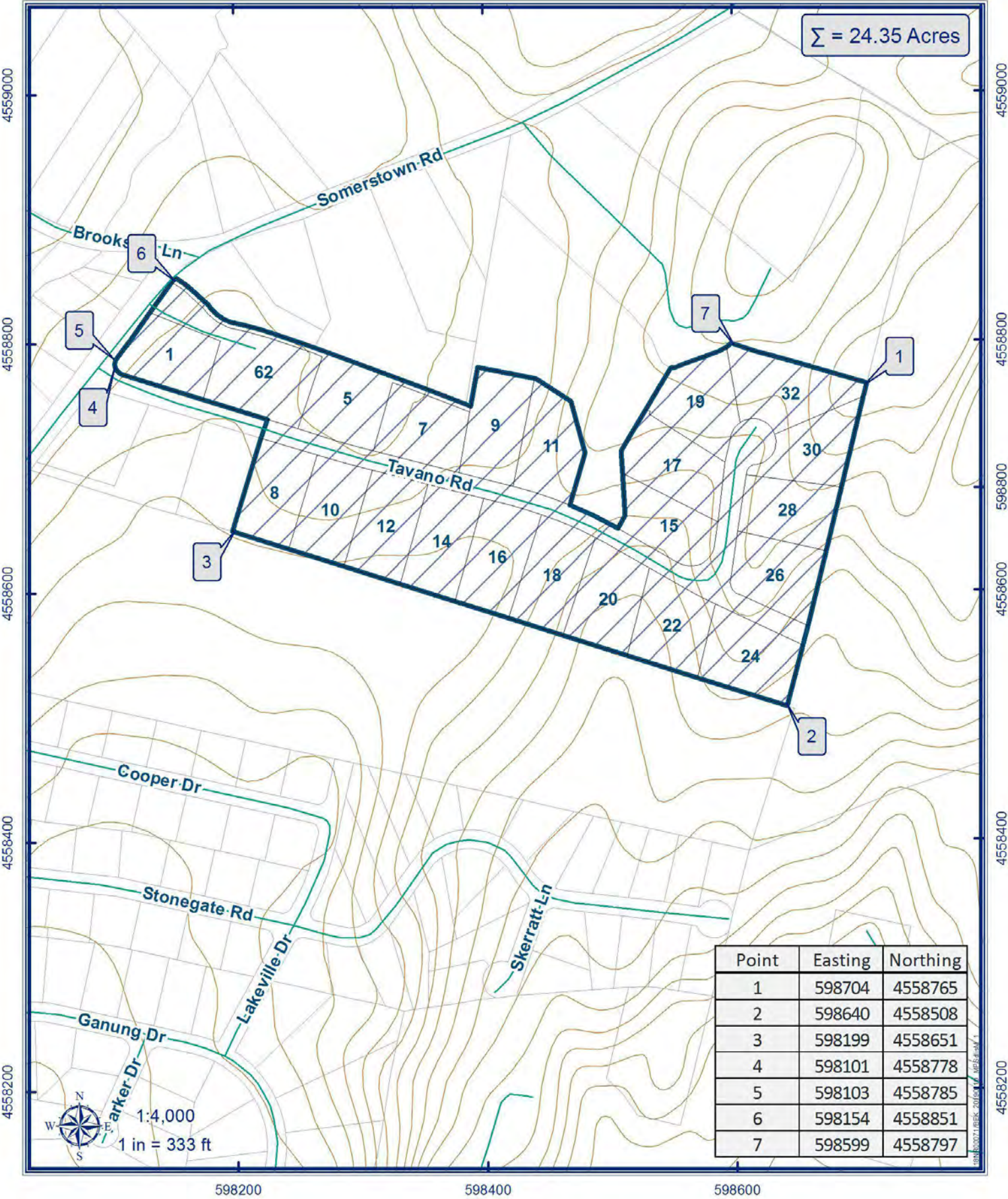
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Robinwood  
Historic District

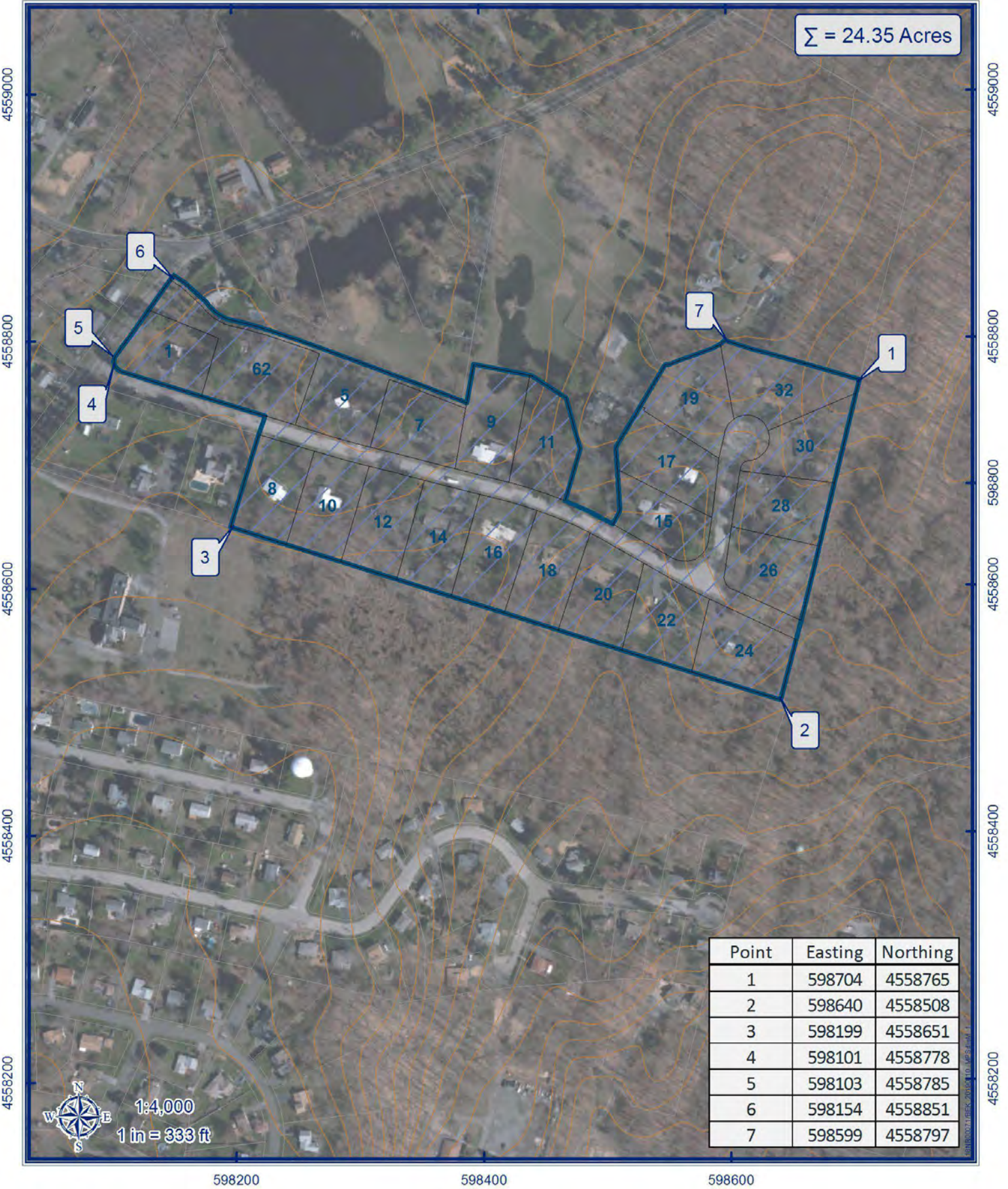


Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation









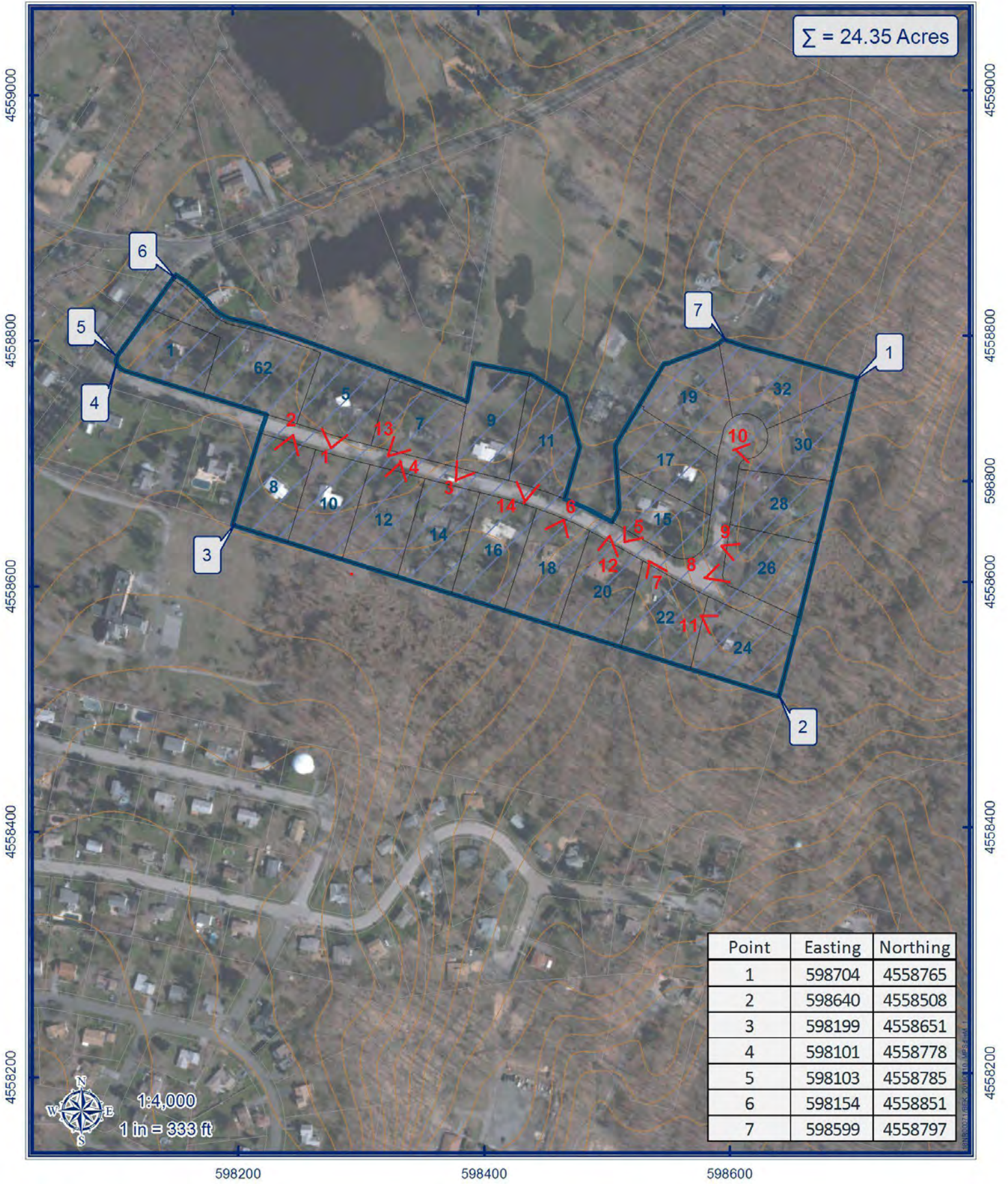
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Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Robinwood Historic District

Photograph Key

Ossining, Westchester  
County, New York



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter

Robinwood  
Historic District



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation



























































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 3/8/2019      Date of Pending List: 3/21/2019      Date of 16th Day: 4/5/2019      Date of 45th Day: 4/22/2019      Date of Weekly List: 4/5/2019

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

☒ Accept      ☐ Return      ☐ Reject      4/5/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:      see attached comments : No      see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO  
Governor

ROSE HARVEY  
Commissioner



30 January 2019

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW  
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

First of all, welcome back! I am pleased to submit the following seven nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Robinwood Historic District, Westchester County (22 owners, 0 objections)  
Rensselaer Society of Engineers House, Rensselaer County  
Dresden District School No 2, Washington County  
Hazard Willcox Jr. Farm, Chenango County (1 owner, no objection)  
Hotel Saranac, Franklin County  
St. Johnsville Historic District, Montgomery County (776 owners, 0 objections)  
Peter Vrooman House, Schoharie County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office